

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TRADE STUDY GROUP MEETING, MAY 30, 1978

REF: TOKYO 6486

1. SUMMARY: TRADE STUDY GROUP MET MAY 30 TO DISCUSS STUDIES ON ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES AND AUTOMOBILES. MITI PRESENTATIONS ON BOTH SUBJECTS WERE WELL RESEARCHED AND POSITIVE IN TONE. IN CASE OF ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES, MITI RESPONSE HAS OPENED THE WAY FOR ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS AND SET THE STAGE FOR SOME REAL PROGRESS IN STANDARDS TESTING AND APPROVAL FOR ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES. MITI DEMONSTRATED UP-BEAT ATTITUDE TOWARD AUTO SALES AND PRESENTED SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS TO US EXPORTERS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE AGENDA FOR MAY 30, TRADE STUDY GROUP MEETING INCLUDED (A) BRIEF REPORT FROM AMERICAN CHAMBER REPRESENTATIVE BALLOUN ON STATUS OF TSG STUDIES, (B) RESPONSE FROM MITI ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN HOME ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES AND STUDY, (C) OVERVIEW PRESENTED BY MITI ON PROBLEMS AND OUTLOOK FOR IMPORTED AUTOMOBILE MARKET IN JAPAN, (D) AN ORAL REPORT BY MITI AND MINISTRY OF FINANCE REPRESENTATIVES ON JAPAN'S IMPORT FINANCING SYSTEMS, AND (E) SUBMISSION OF SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION BY CHAIRMAN OF CHEMICALS STUDY
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TEAM FOR CONSIDERATION BY MITI OFFICES CONCERNED WITH THAT STUDY.

3. SEPARATE FULLER REPORTS ARE BEING SUBMITTED ON THE AUTOMOBILE AND IMPORT FINANCING PRESENTATIONS. THE LATTER WAS ESSENTIALLY A DESCRIPTION OF MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM YEN FINANCING FOR RESOURCES OR GROWTH RELATED IMPORTS AND THE

EMERGENCY DOLLAR IMPORT FINANCING PLANS SET UP IN DECEMBER 1977 TO APPLY TO 1978 IMPORTS. THE FORMER NOTED EARLIER HELPFUL ACTIONS ON USANCE COSTS, TARIFF CUTS AND DELAY OF POLLUTION CONTROL REGULATIONS, AND THEN PRESENTED MITI'S VIEWS ON THE NEED TO INCREASE AUTOMOBILE IMPORTS, A DEMAND FORECAST OF 2 PCT PER YEAR INCREASE, AND A NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS ON POSSIBLE WAYS AND MEANS OF INCREASING IMPORTED AUTOMOBILE SALES IN JAPAN, AND A SIMILAR REVIEW ON AUTOMOBILE PARTS AND ACCESSORIES IMPORTS. THE AUTOMOBILE PRESENTATION INCLUDED SOME NEW IDEAS SUCH AS SEPARATE LISTING OF STANDARD AND OPTIONAL ACCESSORY PRICES, STRENGTHENING OF IMPORTED DEALER NETWORK BY FOREIGN CAR MANUFACTURER TIE-UP WITH USED CAR DEALERS IN JAPAN AND MORE STRESS ON FLEET SALES TO CAR RENTAL AND LEASING FIRMS. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE CONTENT WAS THE POSITIVE MANNER IN WHICH THE REVIEW WAS PRESENTED.

4. IN CASE OF ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES MITI REPRESENTATIVE EXPLAINED TECHNICAL AND LEGAL REASONS WHY JAPAN CANNOT IN THE SHORT RUN MERELY ADOPT UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES STANDARDS AND APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED IN THE HOME ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES STUDY. HE ANNOUNCED, HOWEVER, THAT MITI WAS EXAMINING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES IN CONNECTION WITH PROTOTYPE APPROVAL AND TESTING OF WHICH THE MOST FEASIBLE APPEARED TO BE A PRIOR CERTIFICATION ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN FOREIGN MANUFACTURERS AND SPECIFIED JAPANESE TESTING IN-

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STITUTES. THE PRIOR CERTIFICATION SCHEME UNDER STUDY WOULD, HE THOUGHT, GREATLY SIMPLIFY FORMAL PROTOTYPE APPROVAL. MITI IS STUDYING WHAT REVISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE IN THE ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES LAW IN ORDER TO MAKE A NEW PRIOR CERTIFICATION SYSTEM EFFECTIVE AS OF APRIL 1, 1979. MITI'S WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES STANDARDS DIRECTLY AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL WAS EMPHASIZED AND THE ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES STUDY GROUP HAS ALREADY INITIATED SOME DISCUSSIONS ALONG THIS LINE.

5. WITH REFERENCE TO THE STUDY RECOMMENDATION THAT IMPORTERS BE INCLUDED ON MITI CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES, MR. KAWASAKI REQUESTED THAT THE APPROPRIATE IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION NOMINATE SOME TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS.

6. IN LINE WITH LATEST SIA-ACCJ CONVERSATIONS, NO ACTION WAS TAKEN TO APPROVE UNDERTAKING OF SEMICONDUCTOR STUDY.

MANSFIELD

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